

LITHUANIAN POLICE GUARD PARLIAMENT AS PRESSURE RISES

NEW SOVIET RAIDS FEARED

President of Republic Urges Recognition and Support, Saying Time Is Short

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VILNIUS, Lithuania, March 27 — The leaders of Lithuania marshaled their meager police force to protect government and communications centers here today after Soviet troops seized young Lithuanian army deserters and secured the republic's Communist headquarters early this morning.

The Lithuanians acted at the height of another tense day of dark rumor and increasing pressure from the Kremlin, which had the Soviet Army continuing the expansion of its presence in the city.

U.S. 'Sold Us Out'

The Lithuanian President, Vytautas Landsbergis, pleaded openly for international support, saying that time was running out for bolstering the fledgling government with official recognition. He was bitter at times toward the Bush Administration, charging that it had "sold us out" for larger interests.

"Are they willing once again to sell Lithuania to the Soviet Union?" he asked, invoking Lithuania's forced annexation by the Soviet Union in 1940.

[In Moscow, the Soviet Foreign Ministry ordered all foreigners to leave Lithuania, charging that the presence of journalists and diplomats was encouraging extremists in their defiance of Soviet power. Journalists must leave as their permission to stay expires, the order said. Page A6.]

Rally Backed by Moscow

After what Lithuanian officials described as a frightening night of raids on hospitals sheltering deserters and on the Lithuanian Communist Party headquarters, the Landsbergis Government set out a thin siege defense at its Parliament headquarters. It called in 200 patrolmen armed only with nightsticks and unraveled firehoses for a feared daylight assault that never occurred.

The Lithuanian leadership was further unsettled when several thousand pro-Moscow opponents of the republic's declaration of independence from Soviet rule mounted a protest on the square adjoining the Parliament building.

Bright red Soviet flags were unfurled, and the crowd shouted that the Landsbergis Government was "dictatorial" toward the republic's non-Lithuanian minority, mainly Russians and Poles. About 9 percent of the republic's residents are Russians and 7 percent are Poles; 80 percent are Lithuanians.

Gen. Valentin I. Varennikov, chief of Soviet ground forces, said that the military moves were necessary to protect Soviet property in the face of assertions by Lithuanian officials that Soviet

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Opponents of Lithuanian independence at a rally yesterday near the Parliament building in Vilnius.

Associated Press



Associated Press

After Soviet troops secured the Lithuanian Communist Party headquarters in Vilnius yesterday, a Lithuanian woman argued with a Soviet officer as other residents gathered to watch outside the headquarters.

Lithuanians Anxious and Angry at U.S.

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aw would no longer be obeyed. The general, who has been in the republic for several days, told the Communist Party newspaper Pravda today that he was following instructions from President Mikhail S. Gorbachev and the Soviet Government.

General Varennikov scoffed at charges that a predawn tank parade on Saturday past an all-night session of the Lithuanian Parliament was intended as intimidation; he said the column was moved at night through the sleeping city to avoid snarling traffic.

The pro-Moscow rally, small considering that Soviet Army helicopters had dropped leaflets throughout the city to encourage participation, produced none of the provocations to violence and fresh Kremlin intrigues feared by Vilnius officials.

For President Landsbergis, the booming rally outside his office marked another helter-skelter day spent trying to secure the republic's 16-day-old claim to independence.

This clearly was growing more fragile by the day as the Gorbachev Government kept up its pressure.

This morning, Mr. Landsbergis was morose as he passed on to Parliament the news that Soviet paratroopers had broken into a city psychiatric ward at 3:15 A.M. There, the government had set up a shelter, guarded only by medical personnel, for the hundreds of young Lithuanians who had deserted the Soviet Army since the independence declaration.

About half of the 39 deserters hiding out there were reported captured in the raid by 20 armed soldiers, who were said to have beaten some of the Lithuanians in taking them into custody. The others managed to flee. Other deserters were reported captured in a

similar raid in the university city of Kaunas.

In the street outside another target of the nighttime raids, the republic's Communist headquarters, Lithuanians gathered this afternoon, watching and speaking in anxious tones.

'Catastrophic'

"What Gorbachev is doing is catastrophic," a woman said loudly to the crowd around her.

Another asked, "How can Bush support Gorbachev?"

"And Gorbachev calls himself a democrat," came another voice. "What kind of democracy have they ever had in the Soviet Union?"

A half-mile away at Parliament, Algirdas Brazauskas, the leader of the republic's breakaway Communist Party, speculated that the troop movements, which have led to the seizure of a half-dozen party offices, had to do with a turf fight between the rival Communist factions.

"You could say it is a warning step," he said, referring to the raids in terms of the larger question that teased this anxious city all day, whether troops might finally be dispatched against the young government. "Anything is possible."

In repeated criticism of the Bush Administration, Mr. Landsbergis sought to invoke the memory of the secret Hitler-Stalin pact of 1940, which ceded Lithuania and its neighboring Baltic republics, Estonia and Latvia, to Soviet control. The United States has never formally recognized Soviet authority over the three states.

U.S.-Soviet Deal Is Seen

Mr. Landsbergis said that "secret" telegrams had been exchanged recently by Foreign Minister Eduard A. Shevardnadze of the Soviet Union and Secretary of State James A. Baker 3d. Mr. Landsbergis said that while he did not know the contents, the communications coincided with a basic "change of position" by the Kremlin on the use of force in Lithuania.

"The U.S. sold us out," he said.

President Gorbachev had pledged not to use troops in Lithuania except when there was threat to people's safety, he noted. But Mr. Shevardnadze said they would not be used except "to maintain public order," Mr. Landsbergis continued, contending that this reported distinction amounted to a policy change indicating that force might be used indiscriminately in Lithuania.

"We do not know whether this is another instance of secret documents, in a scenario that recalls 1940," he said of the forced annexation of Lithuania.

Referendum Call at Rally

In the last few days, the Soviet authorities have grown more pronounced in their activities. General Varennikov's account of the crisis carried in the Soviet-controlled press this morning dispelled any remaining doubts that the Kremlin is calculating the army actions.

As the pro-Moscow rally went forward, the Lithuanian Parliament passed a resolution accusing the Kremlin of "blackmail by means of armed interference." At the rally, the crowd cheered when a speaker demanded, "We want a referendum" on the question of leaving the Soviet Union. Lithuanian officials insist that the population's majority view has been well documented in the two years of the separatist movement and in recent parliamentary elections.

Mr. Landsbergis says the issue is one of unilaterally restoring independence, and not, as Mr. Gorbachev insists, an issue of mutually agreeing on secession.

"Be calm," those attending the rally were advised as they disbanded peacefully. "Do not give in to provocations."

Mr. Landsbergis had much the same advice for his partisans. But he focused his day far more on pleas to the democratic powers of the West, who he said have not spoken up clearly to help Lithuania regain its freedom.

"We know whom we're dealing with," he said of the Kremlin's involvement in Lithuanian history. "The West is being fooled, or perhaps the West is making concessions because they have their own problems."